Important Information about ASTHMA and Pneumococcal Disease

Talk to Your Patients about Protecting Themselves from this Dangerous Infection

Saving Lives: Integrating Vaccines for Adults Into Routine Care

- Patients with asthma are at increased risk for complications from pneumococcal disease.
  - This is true even if a patient's asthma symptoms are well controlled.
- Pneumococcal disease causes serious illnesses like meningitis, bacteremia, and pneumonia.
- Invasive pneumococcal disease is particularly deadly. Pneumococcal bacteremia and meningitis kill 15 to 20 percent and 16 to 37 percent of those infected, respectively.
- Pneumococcal disease survivors may suffer hearing loss, seizures, blindness, or paralysis.
- While it isn't completely understood why people with asthma are more likely to suffer from serious pneumococcal disease, related factors may include:
  - The correlation between respiratory infections and asthma exacerbations
  - The disrupted barrier of the airway lining, increased mucous production, and alterations in immune responses in people with asthma
  - Use of asthma medications (eg, oral corticosteroids) that may suppress the immune system
- Pneumococcal vaccination is recommended for all adults with asthma. Medicare and most private insurance companies pay for vaccination for patients who need it.

Adults with ASTHMA are among those who need pneumococcal vaccination

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23) for adults with asthma and other risk factors:

- Anyone age 65 and older
- Adults age 19-64 with any of the following conditions: lung, heart, liver, kidney, or sickle cell disease; asthma; diabetes; or alcoholism
- Cigarette smokers
- Residents of long-term care facilities

Most of these adults need only one vaccination. Patients with asthma and no additional risk factor require a second dose of vaccine at age 65 if it's been five years since their first dose.

CDC also recommends pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) in addition to PPSV23 for the following adults:

- Immunocompromising conditions (HIV/AIDS, lymphoma or leukemia) **or receiving immunosuppressive treatment (steroids,** radiation therapy, etc.)
- Damaged or no spleen
- Cochlear implants or cerebro-spinal fluid leaks

The number and timing of doses for these adults varies. For more information, refer to the Pneumococcal Vaccination Guide for Adults or visit: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/.

For more information and resources to educate patients about pneumococcal disease, visit: Adultvaccination.org/pneumotools.

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